



Volume 6  
No. 1, 2019  
page 1-9

**Article History:**

Submitted:  
0107-2019  
Accepted:  
10-08-2019  
Published:  
01-09-2019

available at <http://ejournal.stkipjb.ac.id/index.php/jeell>

P-ISSN 2356-5446

E-ISSN 2598-3059



## THE IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INTEGRATED APPROACHES IN IMPROVING ENGLISH BASIC SKILLS FOR BEGINNERS

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URL: <https://doi.org/10.32682/jeell.v6i1.1036>

DOI: [doi.org/10.32682/jeell.v6i1.1036](https://doi.org/10.32682/jeell.v6i1.1036)

### Abstract

There are a lot of approaches in learning a new language particularly English and there have been many studies that attempted to seek the best one. However, the attempts have failed because there is no single approach that can be considered as the best one. That is because each approach has its own advantages and drawbacks and most of them are situational. Therefore, this study combined some of the approaches in order to create a more effective language teaching method. The main objectives of this study were 1) to see the applicability of the implementation of the integrated approaches and 2) to find out the effectiveness of the implementation of the integrated approaches in improving English basic skills for beginners. Action research design as well as quantitative analysis by using statistical calculation were used in this study as the research method. The result of this study showed that there were two main obstacles in implementing the integrated approaches and there was a significant positive impact of using the integrated approaches in improving the beginners' English basic skills.

**Keyword:** *implementation, effectiveness, integrated approaches, English basic skills*

### Abstrak

Ada banyak pendekatan dalam mempelajari bahasa baru terutama bahasa Inggris dan ada banyak penelitian yang berusaha mencari yang terbaik. Namun, upaya tersebut gagal karena tidak ada pendekatan tunggal yang dapat dianggap sebagai yang terbaik. Itu karena setiap pendekatan memiliki kelebihan dan kekurangannya sendiri dan kebanyakan dari pendekatan tersebut bersifat situasional. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menggabungkan beberapa pendekatan untuk menciptakan metode pengajaran bahasa yang lebih efektif. Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah 1) untuk melihat penerapan pendekatan terpadu dan 2) untuk mengetahui efektivitas penerapan pendekatan terpadu dalam meningkatkan keterampilan dasar bahasa Inggris bagi pemula. *Action research design* serta analisis kuantitatif dengan menggunakan perangkat perhitungan statistik digunakan dalam penelitian ini sebagai metode penelitian. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ada dua hambatan utama dalam menerapkan pendekatan terpadu dan ada dampak positif yang signifikan dari menggunakan pendekatan terpadu dalam meningkatkan keterampilan dasar bahasa Inggris bagi para pemula.

**Kata kunci:** *implementasi, efektivitas, pendekatan terpadu, kemampuan dasar Bahasa Inggris*

### Introduction

In today's globalized era, it is undeniable that English ability is highly essential to be owned by anyone. It is not only essential as a means to communicate with anyone across many countries in the world, but also as an asset for competing in the workplace. More importantly, it is widely used in academic field and becomes a mandatory subject in many schools. Therefore, students are highly expected to master the language. However, it is found that, in general, students have low English skills particularly in the countries where English is not spoken as the first language (Souriyavongsa, 2013)

Indonesia is one of the countries in which English not spoken as the mother tongue. English is just a foreign language that is learned by students at schools. It becomes one of compulsory subjects from junior high school until university. It means that, anyone who graduated from high school, they have learned English for 6 years. However, the fact shows that only a small number of people are able to speak the international language. Even, before the implementation of the 2013 curriculum, English became an compulsory subject

since elementary school, but still the vast majority of people could not master the language. This becomes a big problem that has not been solved yet.

There might be a lot of factors that contribute to the problem. One of the most contributive ones is probably because English is a foreign language in Indonesia and it is not commonly used by Indonesians in daily interaction (Yulia, 2013). Another one might be because of the language interference. In Indonesia, the first language of the people is generally the local language because almost all region has its own local language that is commonly used for social life. According to Chang (2011: 16), the structure and word order of learners' first language have an influence when they learn a new language. The second language is Bahasa. It is widely used in academic instruction and many other areas. These two languages could cause difficulty in learning a foreign language because the speakers have got used to using it. The third contributive factor possibly lies on the methods and approaches used to teach the language. That is because approaches play a significant role to the successfulness of teaching a new language (Joukouliau, 2016)

The first two factors mentioned above might be difficult to overcome because it is impractical to change the condition. Therefore, the third factor is the only one that needs to be addressed to deal with the problem. There have been a lot of methods in teaching English found and proposed by previous researchers such as grammar translation method, direct method, bilingual method, structural approach, audiolingual method, task-based language teaching, communicative language teaching and so on. Each method might have its strength and weaknesses. However, there is no one single method that serve as a complete or the best one (Kumar & Sallaja, 2015).

Besides the methods previously discussed, there are also some approaches in teaching English such as structural approach, communicative approach, situational approach, task-based approach, dialog-based approach and some others. Hence, Kumar & Sallaja, 2015 suggested that these approaches are best used based on the situations that are suitable with them to reach their effectiveness. For example, communicative approach can be effective if it is used in small class and otherwise. Therefore, it is imperative to take situations into consideration when teachers want to implement approaches in teaching English.

Because of the fact that the approaches are situational and have strengths and weaknesses, the researchers, therefore, combined some approaches to create an integrated approach that can be more effective in teaching English. They are communicative approach, grammar translation method, task-based approach and dialog-based approach. According to

Joukoulia (2016), an integrated approach that covers both traditional and communicative approaches is recommended to be implemented to gain better results and enhance the teaching quality. The traditional approach that he meant is grammar translation method. The two approaches have become the most frequently used ones by teachers for a long time (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, pp. 11 & 121). In addition, Joukoulia (2016) stated that employing both approaches is more effective and efficient.

Communicative approach is an approach that focuses on the process of communication rather than the mastery of language (Kamalja, 2014). Similarly, Renau (2016) contends that the main objective of the approach is to acquire communication skill instead of mastering linguistic structures. By using the approach, learners are expected to be able to communicate in English for daily interaction in real situation or context (Kurniawan, 2013). He adds that, in the approach, the learning process is focused on the communication, instead of knowledge about the language itself. This means that speaking and listening skills become the main focus. Otherwise, in the traditional method, its focus lies on learning grammar rules and vocabularies and is emphasized on reading and writing skills (Renau, 2016). Therefore, the combination of these two approaches can provide the learning of four basic language skills; speaking, listening, reading and writing. Kumar and Sallaja (2015) state that the best method to teach a language is the one which develops the four skills.

Another approach in teaching a language that is often used is dialog-based approach. This approach gives opportunities to students to 1) use the language contextually; 2) explore the language through situational activities and 3) experience the learning process that cannot be duplicated in the classroom (Amrullah 2000). According to Bordes (2016), when people engage in dialogs, the feedback is from other people's responses, which therefore contain very rich information. In addition, peer feedback might be less threatening than teacher feedback since students would feel more comfortable with their friends and hence evokes less anxiety of making mistakes (Afrin, 2014). Even though the approach puts its emphasis on the vocabulary mastery and quality of talk in oral interchanges, it also offers a positive impact on children's reasoning abilities and use of language (Arizpe Vicencio, 2012). In addition, it not only can enrich their vocabularies and improve way of speaking, but also enhance their writing ability.

The last combined approach in this study is task-based approach. According to Rozati (2014), both grammatical and communicative competence become the main focus in this approach. He added that the approach includes interactive tasks to be performed in the target language, instead of a sequence

of language items. The approach can help motivate students and put teachers' and students' attention on meaning and communicative use of language (Sanchez, 2004). This is in line with what Renau (2016) said that "English teaching should not be limited to the study of its structure, but to the use of the language in different contexts in order to be adapted to this new reality".

Based on the review above, it can be inferred that the integration of the four approaches is believed to create an effective language teaching method. That is because the drawbacks of one approach can be covered by another approach, so that each approach can complement one another. Therefore, this study seeks to know the implementation and to find out the effectiveness of these integrated approaches particularly in improving English basic skills for beginners.

## Research Methods

This study was conducted in Al-Falah Orphanage in Padang. The participants of this study were 21 school students ranging from 7<sup>th</sup> grade until 12<sup>nd</sup> grade. They are 15 girls and 6 boys. Though the participants were different in terms of age and grade, they were generally at the same level of English, that was beginner because they had a very limited knowledge and skills of English. That was why there was no need to separate them based on their grade.

Action research design was used in this study in order to see the applicability of the implementation of the integrated approaches. Yanti (2017) states that action research is a reflective process carried out through collaborative activity to find solution suitable to the problems to improve instruction and students' achievement. In doing this study, the researchers worked with some collaborators. Then, the researchers conducted the research based on the action research stages proposed by Cohen et al., (2005 p. 226). The stages consist of some steps; 1) planning, 2) acting, 3) observing and 4) reflecting.

In the first stage (planning), the researchers identified the problem by doing an interview with the participants to know their English level and it was found that all participants were beginners. Then, the researchers designed a modul that combines the four approaches and contains the basic English materials such as sentence structure and tenses. In the second stage (acting), the collaborators did the implementation of the learning process and the researchers took notes. The procedures of the implementation were as follow: first, the participants had a dialog to discuss the materials. Second, the participants did some tasks (multiple choice and translating expressions from Bahasa into English.

In doing the translation, they needed to construct words into sentences based on the rules. In doing this, they did not need to look up the meanings of each word or phrase in dictionary because the meaning of the word or phrase is already put above the exercises in order to ease them to do the tasks. Third, they read what they have written and the collaborators would help them in case they found difficulty in pronouncing the words or correct them if they made mistakes. Last, they were asked to speak in English just by looking at the dialog in Bahasa.

In the third stage (observing), the researchers observed the learning process in order to see whether the implementation of the integrated approaches are applicable or not. During the process, the researchers filled the field notes to write down anything that occurred in the learning process such as the obstacles that were found as well as the probable solution that might be able to overcome the obstacles.

Furthermore, in order to know whether the integrated approaches can improve the students' basic English skills, in this case is the ability to answer simple questions in English, the researchers conducted pre-test and post-test. There were fourty questions in each test and the questions were related to basic knowlegde of English such as sentence structure, parts of speech and tenses. The scores of both tests were analyzed by using paired samples test to see the improvement before and after the use of the integrated approaches.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***The Implementation of the Integrated Approaches***

Based on the data gathered from field notes, it was found that there were two main obstacles in implementing the integrated approaches and some probable solutions to deal with the obstacles. The first obstacle occurred because of the low motivation of some participants in learning English particularly the boys. Most of them did not want to concentrate during the learning and often made noise. As a result, it also influenced the other participants who had high motivation in learning the language. In addition, it was also difficult to ask them to do the tasks. The collaborators have actually attempted to arouse their motivation to learn, yet it did not have a good impact on them. Therefore, there was no solution found dealing with this obstacle.

The second obstacle occurred because of the participants' low confidence especially when they were asked to speak in English. It was a bit difficult to ask some participants to speak because they were shy and afraid of making mistakes. Thus, the collaborators just asked them to read the English expressions. However, this problem just happened from the first meeting until the fifth

meeting. Since then, they were getting confident to speak in English. That happened because the collaborators always tried to nicely persuade and guide them to speak, not to directly force them.

The third obstacle in implementing the integrated approaches occurred because of the participants'

### ***The Effectiveness of the Integrated Approaches in Improving the Participants' Basic English Skills***

The effectiveness of the integrated approaches in improving the participants' basic English skills can be seen from the tables below that are based on the result of analysis by using SPSS.

| Paired Samples Statistics |           |         |    |                |                 |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|----|----------------|-----------------|
|                           |           | Mean    | N  | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Pair 1                    | Pre-test  | 42.8571 | 21 | 12.33100       | 2.69084         |
|                           | Post-test | 69.5238 | 21 | 8.68256        | 1.89469         |

*Gambar 1 Style yang tersedia pada home (klik Caption)*

From the result above, it can be seen that the mean score of pre-test and post-test was 42.8571 and 69.5238 respectively. This means that there is a difference between the pre-test and the post-test. In order to prove whether the difference was significant or not, let's see the table of paired sample correlations below.

| Paired Samples Correlations |                      |    |             |      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|----|-------------|------|
|                             |                      | N  | Correlation | Sig. |
| Pair 1                      | Pre-test & Post-test | 21 | .918        | .000 |

The output above shows the correlation between the two variables (pre-test and post-test). Based on the result, it can be seen that the correlation value is 0.918 with the significance value of 0.000. Since the significance value is less

than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between the two variables.

| Paired Samples Test |                     |                    |                |                 |   |           |         |                 |       |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|-----------|---------|-----------------|-------|
|                     |                     | Paired Differences |                |                 |   | t         | df      | Sig. (2-tailed) |       |
|                     |                     | Mean               | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |           |         |                 |       |
|                     |                     |                    |                |                 | Lower                                     |           |         |                 | Upper |
| Pair 1              | Pre-test- Post-test | -2.666E1           | 5.55278        | 1.21172         | -29.19426                                 | -24.13907 | -22.007 | 20              | .000  |

Most importantly, based on the output of paired samples test above, it is known that the value of sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This means that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is improvement or influence of implementing the integrated approaches in improving the English basic skills for beginners.

## Conclusion

Teaching English in a country where English becomes a foreign language such as Indonesia is a challenging task. The number of people who have a good English ability is still small. There might be many factors that contribute to this problem and one of the factor that is possible to be addressed is the approach in teaching the language. There have been many approaches found and proposed by researchers, yet there is still no approach that was found to be the most effective one to be implemented in many situations because most of them are situational. The researchers assumed the integration of some approaches might create a more effective language teaching method, instead of just one. Therefore, this study attempted to see the implementation and the effectiveness of integrated approaches in improving English basic skills particularly for beginners.

Based on the result and discussion, it has been proved the use of the integrated approaches have significant impacts in improving English basic skills for beginners. Therefore, it can be said that the integrated approaches are effective. However, it was found that there were few obstacles in implementing the approaches that occurred because of the participants' low motivation and confidence. In addition, the integrated approaches are believed to be unapplicable if they are implemented in a big class and there must be more than two teachers involved. Thus, the approaches cannot be implemented in schools,



but it can be implemented in a small class. In the end, future studies related to this topic with larger data are highly encouraged to be conducted.

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